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ABSTRACT

Surveying over 6,000 vocational schools and all state directors of education, this study attempted to (1) describe the organization and governance of state and local agencies and delivery systems for vocational education; (2) describe the basic provisions by which the costs of vocational education are funded; and (3) describe the status and condition of the nation's vocational education system. Data for the study was collected through personal interviews with state directors and a mail survey with a telephone follow-up of 6,693 public secondary and two-year postsecondary institutions having facilities for five or more different vocational education programs. Findings indicate that state governance structures for vocational education are characterized by a multitude of different board structures having different compositions and levels of authority over the state agencies responsible for vocational education. In addition, at the local level there are seven types of institutions, thirteen different types of program administration structures, and four different types of single and multi-district services. Findings also indicate that the location of institutions having facilities for five or more different vocational education programs does not reflect the distribution of the population and that funds under the direct control of the state agency generally do not represent the major source of vocational education support. (LRA)

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A NATIONAL STUDY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND FACILITIES

Paper presented for

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A NATIONAL STUDY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
SYSTEMS AND FACILITIES

1. Purpose of the Study

The three major objectives of this study were to:

- Describe the organization and governance of State and local agencies and delivery systems for vocational education;
- Describe the basic provisions by which the capital and operating costs of vocational education are funded; and
- Describe the status and condition of the nation's vocational education system in terms of its capacity, its services, its accessibility to students, and the adequacy, condition, and level of utilization of its facilities.

The study was designed to secure information about the principal organizational characteristics, operating policies and practices of the agencies, and delivery systems through which vocational education is provided. The study sought to identify the agencies having responsibility for vocational education and the locating of these agencies within the State educational system. It also sought to examine the formal and informal relationships for the planning and coordination of vocational programs as well as the control and expenditure of federal vocational funds.

In addition to this analysis of State policies and procedures, the study sought to provide information about the organization and governance of vocational education at the local level and the operating characteristics of vocational education programs, particularly the shared time programs and inter-institutional arrangements which impact on the use of vocational education facilities.

The second study objective sought to document the general provisions under which State and federal vocational education funds are expended for facilities construction, equipment acquisition, and basic instructional program support. This study focused specifically on Part B funds and no attempt was made to look at funds from other parts of the Act.

The third objective of the study was to determine the status and condition of the vocational education system. The study was to analyze facilities information such as age, condition, capacity, information about the population served both geographic and students - secondary, postsecondary and adult. It also was to include information about the extent to which available facilities are used to their capacity, either by the public schools or by other agencies.

2. Description of the Study Sample

The universe of interest for this group contained two major respondent groups - local vocational education agencies and State directors of vocational education. The schools for inclusion in the local vocational education agency sample were defined as all schools qualifing for designation as area vocational schools according to the definition of area vocational schools set forth in the Act, except with the following provisions:

1. It was decided that only schools having shop/laboratory facilities for five or more <u>different</u> program areas would be studied.

2. The universe of schools would include all secondary schools (both comprehensive and vocational high schools and area centers) and all two-year postsecondary institutions (community, junior colleges and technical institutions) meeting the definition of the Act.

The final definition of the study universe was:

- All public secondary and two-year postsecondary institutions having five or more shop/laboratory/classroom facilities in different program areas in vocational-technical education and administered by the public school system or as free-standing two-year postsecondary educational institutions or system.

Specifically excluded from this study were institutions administered directly by or as branch campuses of institutions of higher education.

The final number of schools that were included in this study was 9,600.

For the State portion of this study, all State directors for vocational education were participants in this study. All 50 states plus the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Gwam, American Samoa, and the Trust Territories.

3. Methodology

Data for the study was collected through two procedures:

- Personal interviews with State directors of vocational education and excutive officers of other State agencies having responsibility for educational systems in which vocational education programs are provided.
- A mail survey with a telephone followup of all public secondary and free-standing two-year postsecondary institutions having facilities for five or more different vocational education programs.

Since the universe for inclusion in this survey represented approximately 9,600 schools, it was felt that a strong base of support was essential in order to obtain the highest possible response rates with the participating schools. Therefore, a comprehensive program was developed to obtain this support and to make certain that all individuals that might be needed in this data collection activity would be kept informed as to its progress. Preliminary contacts were made with the State directors of vocational education and chief state school officers, CEIS coordinators and with the regional offices of the Office of Education. During the course of the study ongoing communication was maintained with the State directors and with many of the large city directors of vocational education. This information sharing was one of the major reasons that the data collection activities were able to be conducted so successfully.

The survey of the 9,600 institutions involved up to three attempts to solicit school participation. The first attempt was an initial certified letter and a copy of the questionnaire. Those not responding were then sent a mailgram and a second questionnaire. If we still were not able to obtain responses, a key item telephone followup was undertaken. These procedures enabled us to obtain an overall response rate of almost 95 percent.

4. Study Findings

The findings from this study indicate that a significant amount of further research is needed in order to be able to identify specific recommendations which can be immediately implemented. There was a great amount of data, however, that has enabled us to begin to describe the characteristics and operation of the vocational education system in this nation. This is a major accomplishment in and of itself.

The following discussion will summarize the most significant findings of the study as they contribute to our initial study objectives.

4.1 State and Local Governance of Vocational Education

The State governance structures for vocational education can be characterized by a multitude of different types of board structures having different compositions and levels of authority over the State agencies responsible for vocational education as well as a number of different class of administrative units and different levels of authority over the institutions that provide vocational education.

In addition, there exists a multitude of special provisions and practices ranging from informal agreements to coordinating agencies that are established by State legislation. Table 1 summarizes the provisions that exist for program coordination in each State.

This diversity of State level organizational structure and authority has a potentially significant impact on the extent to which the "sole State agency" for vocational education can effectively implement Federal program initiatives.

The delivery of vocational education at the local level is nearly as complex. There are 7 types of institutions, 13 different types of program administration structures and 4 different types of single and multi-district services. Add to this the regional programs and the various types of agencies delivering services at that level and you find a significant amount of independence and autonomy at the local level in the delivery of services to students. This complexity at the local level indicates the variety of objectives and goals that can be represented within each one of these systems. They also suggest

Table 1. Summary of provisions for agency interaction

State	Agency Interaction Is Achieved Through: Board Membership Provisions[1]	Structured Provisions for Formal Agency Interaction[2]	Legislatively Created Coordinating Authorities[3]	Role and/or Mission Statement[4]	Informal Agency Interaction[5]
Alabama	S				
Alaska	S				
Arizona	X				X
Arkansas			X		
California		X			
Colorado	S	X			
Connecticut	X	X		X	
Delaware		X	X		X
District of Columbia					
Florida	S				
Georgia				X	
Hawaii	X	X			
Idaho	S				
Illinois	X	X	X		X
Indiana	X				
Iowa	S				
Kansas	S				
Kentucky					
Louisiana					
Maine	S				
Maryland					
Massachusetts	X			X	
Michigan	S				
Minnesota			X		
Mississippi	S				
Missouri					
Montana	S				
Nebraska			X		
Nevada					
New Hampshire	S		X		
New Jersey					X
New Mexico	S				
New York	S				
North Carolina	S	X		X	
North Dakota	X	X	X		
Ohio				X	
Oklahoma		X		X	
Oregon	S		X		
Pennsylvania	S		X		
Rhode Island	S				
South Carolina	X				X
South Dakota	X				
Tennessee		X			
Texas				X	
Utah	S	X			
Vermont					
Virginia				X	
Washington	X				
West Virginia				X	
Wisconsin	X	X		X	
Wyoming	X				
American Samoa	S				
Guam	S				
Puerto Rico	X	X			
Trust Territory	S				
Virgin Islands	S				

[1]For specific provisions see Table I-6.

[2]For specific provisions see Table I-7.

[3]For specific provisions see Table I-8.

[4]For specific provisions see Table I-9.

[5]For specific provisions see Table I-10.

X: Provision exists; see following tables for specific provisions.

S: Single State Board has responsibility over all institutions offering vocational education.

differences in the extent to which State agencies can have an impact on not only the delivery of services to students but also on the institutions themselves.

4.2 Vocational Education Program Financing

Vocational education programs may be financed from as many as four primary sources:

- Local revenues;
- State general education revenues;
- State vocational education revenues; and
- Federal Vocational Education Act funds.

Of these revenue sources, the funds under the direct control of the State agency generally do not represent the major source of vocational education support; and even when they do the State agency generally has little discretion in the manner of their expenditure.

There are a variety of methods for the distribution of funds for vocational education and these modes of distribution generally differ based on the source of those funds. Funds from the same source, however, may be distributed to different institutions or to the same institution for different purposes.

4.3 Vocational Education Facility Resources Distribution and Utilization

The location of institutions having facilities for five or more different vocational education programs does not reflect

the distribution of the population. The institution/population and station/population ratios are significantly higher for medium cities, small towns, and rural communities than for the central cities and schools of large urban areas. This information suggests two possibilities. One, that the needs of cities and suburbs in major urban areas are not being met or two, the needs of medium cities, small towns and rural areas are being over supplied. There is, of course, the possibility that both of these conclusions can be drawn from this data. Table 2 shows the distribution of schools by type and region served.

The data and information compiled in the conduct of this study suggest the following three general conclusions:

- Differences that exist in the organization, governance and financing of vocational education systems of the 56 States and territories are likely to have a significant impact on the manner in which federal policies are implemented in these different States and territories and on the effect of those policies in achieving the objectives established by the federal government.

- Provisions of federal legislation relating to the manner in which funds are to be distributed do not inherently insure the most efficient use of these resources.

- Many assumptions relating to the functioning of the vocational education systems, specifically those relating to the efficient utilization of facility resources and to the adequacy of existing resources to meet student demands can not be conclusively determined by the study findings.

Table 2. Distribution of schools by type and region served

Institutional Type		Classification of Region Served							
		Cent. City Metro Area 500K+	Suburb Metro Area 500K+	Cent. City Metro Area 100-500K	Suburb Metro Area 100-500K	City or Town 25-100K	Regional Area 0-25K	Regional Area Other	Total[1]
Comprehensive High School	Single District	329	484	277	206	679	160	1,957	4,092
	Regional	34	47	29	20	83	31	178	422
Vocational High School	Single District	39	2	13	3	16	6	7	86
	Regional	21	4	12	14	22	42	16	131
Area Vocational Center	Single District	17	15	20	13	46	31	95	237
	Regional	13	45	17	21	112	235	149	592
Area Vocational School		12	12	22	5	55	105	49	260
Technical Institute		12	6	20	4	23	71	10	146
Community College		79	92	60	24	119	264	56	694

[1] Institutional totals (6,660) do not equal total survey responses (6,693) because some institutions did not respond to the classifying question used in the generation of this table.